

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FAA-00  
AID-05 OPIC-03 /087 W  
-----028172 180152Z /73

P 171330Z NOV 77  
FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1823  
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL OPORTO  
COMUSFORAZ  
USCINCEUR  
CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 0459

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PO  
SUBJECT: AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HARDENS PUBLIC STANCE TOWARD  
LISBON ON AUTONOMY QUESTION

REF: PONTA DELGADA 0440(DTG 031845Z NOV 77)  
PONTA DELGADA 0455(DTG 151740Z NOV 77)(NOTAL)  
PONTA DELGADA 0456(DTG 161605Z NOV 77)

SUMMARY: AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT (RGA) PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL HAS CONFIRMED PERSONALLY WHAT HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY APPARENT DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS, NAMELY THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS SCRAPPED ITS TACTIC OF DOWNPLAYING FRICTIONS WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OVER WHAT IS VIEWED HERE AS LISBON'S FOOT-DRAGGING ON THE QUESTION OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY. HENCEFORTH, HE SAID, THE RGA WILL MOVE MORE FORTHRIGHTLY TO ACHIEVE ITS GOAL OF A BROAD REGIONAL AUTONOMY, AND DISAGREEMENTS WITH LISBON ON THIS ISSUE WILL BE AIRED MORE FULLY THAN IN THE PAST. ACCORDING TO THE RGA PRESIDENT, THE OLD LOW KEY APPROACH, AIMED AT WOOLING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SYMPATHIES FOR RGA  
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PRETENTIONS, PRODUCED FEW TANGIBLE RESULTS. MOREOVER, HE RECOGNIZED THAT POPULARLY PERCEIVED RGA PASSIVITY TOWARD LISBON COST HIS GOVERNMENT SOME LOCAL SUPPORT WHICH HE NOW INTENDS TO RECOVER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NEW LINE: DURING A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMCONSUL NOVEMBER 14, RGA PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL REVIEWED A SERIES OF

MEASURES TAKEN BY HIS GOVERNMENT OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS WHICH HE SAID FOLLOWED A CONSCIOUS RGA DECISION TO BREAK WITH ITS PAST POLICY OF AVOIDING, OR AT LEAST DOWN PLAYING, FRICTIONS WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THE MOST IMPORTANT WERE RGA DECISIONS TO: A) CHALLENGE THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THOSE OF THE SOARES GOVERNMENT'S AUSTERITY MEASURES WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECT THE REGION (REF: PONTA DELGADA 0440). B) FINANCE ITS OWN AIR TRANSPORTATION STUDY INDEPENDENT FROM ONE PLANNED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (REF: PONTA DELGADA 0455). C) PURCHASE 50 PER CENT OF THE SHARES OF SATA, THE REGIONAL AIRLINE AND DEMAND THAT TAP, WHICH OWNS THE REST, CEDE THEM TO THE RGA(REF: PONTA DELGADA 0456). HE SAID THAT ADDITIONAL MEASURES WOULD BE FORTHCOMING.

2. OTHER EXAMPLES: HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE HAD BEEN OTHER RECENT ORCHESTRATED MANIFESTATIONS OF A NEW RGA WILLINGNESS TO AIR DISPUTES WITH LISBON AND TO GIVE EMPHASIS TO THE REGION'S AUTONOMOUS STATUS. FOLLOWING GOP SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATION ROQUE LINO'S VISIT TO THE AZORES IN LATE OCTOBER, HIS RGA COUNTERPART HAD PUBLICLY VOICED HIS DISPLEASURE IN LINO'S UNWILLINGNESS TO RELINQUISH HIS ROL OVER THE GOP RADIO AND TV MONOPOLY IN THE REGION TO THE RGA. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, THE REGIONAL PUBLIC WORKS SECRETARY HAD MADE PUBLIC HIS LONG STANDING PRIVATE REFUSAL TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE GOP MINISTRY OF HOUSING, FOLLOWING THE HOUSING MINISTER'S CRITICISM OF RGA HOUSING PROGRAMS WHILE ON A POLITICAL MISSION FOR THE SOCIALIST PARTY. MOTA AMARAL AGREED THAT ANOTHER CONTENTIOUS STEP HAD BEEN THE RGA'S EARLY CONFIDENTIAL

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PUBLIC RELEASE OF HIS CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE CATALAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT SHORTLY AFTER IT HAD BEEN HANDED TO THE MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC FOR TRANSMITTAL. IN THE PAST, IN DEFERENCE TO GOP SENSITIVITIES, THE RGA ALWAYS HAD

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P 171330Z NOV 77

FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA  
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USCINCEUR  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 0459

AWAITED CONFIRMATION THAT A MESSAGE TO A FOREIGN GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY, PASSED THROUGH THE GOP, HAD BEEN RECEIVED BEFORE MAKING IT PUBLIC.

3. WHY THE CHANGE: MOTA AMARAL EXPLAINED THAT THE MOTIVE FOR THE RGA'S DROPPING ITS FORMER CAUTIOUS APPROACH TOWARD DEALING WITH THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IN LISBON WAS SIMPLY THAT THIS TACTIC HAD FAILED TO PRODUCE THE EXPECTED RESULTS. EVEN THE TRANSFER OF THE SO CALLED GOP PERIPHERAL SERVICES TO THE RGA, THE WAY FOR WHICH HAD SUPPOSEDLY BEEN CLEARED FOLLOWING PSD-PS NATIONAL LEVEL LEGISLATIVE UNDERSTANDINGS LAST SUMMER, HAD NOT GONE WELL. SERIOUS DIFFERENCES EXISTED NOT ONLY BETWEEN THE LABOR AND HOUSING MINISTRIES AND THEIR REGIONAL COUNTERPARTS, BUT ALSO WITH THE EDUCATION MINISTRY. THE SOARES GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, HAD NOT EVEN PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REGISTER (DIARIO DA REPUBLICA) ITS DECISION TO TRANSFER TO THE RGA THE REMAINING ATTRIBUTES OF THE THREE OLD CIVIL GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION. THIS LAPSE MEANT, IN EFFECT, THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN AT ALL. MOTA AMARAL SAID THE RGA FELT COMPELLED TO TRY A MORE AGGRESSIVE STANCE TO PROD  
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THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT TO MOVE AHEAD. HE ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S FORMER APPROACH HAD COST IT SOME LOCAL POPULAR SUPPORT WHICH HE PLANNED TO RECOUP.

4. CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE: MOTA AMARAL SAID HIS DECISION TO TEST THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE SOARES GOVERNMENT'S AUSTERITY MEASURES WAS NOT SIMPLY A BELATED PLOY TO SHORE UP THE RGA'S SAGGING POPULARITY. THE RGA DID NOT WISH THE REGION TO BE DRAGGED DOWN BY THE CONTINENT'S RESPONSE TO ITS DIFFERENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

5. PSD INTERNAL STRIFE: MOTA AMARAL OBSERVED THAT THE RGA CONSCIOUSLY HAD STEERED CLEAR OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE NATIONAL PSD'S INTERNAL DISPUTE SINCE THE QUESTION OF THE PARTY'S SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL AUTONOMY WAS NOT AN ISSUE. IN ITS ONE PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT, THE RGA HAD EMPHASIZED ITS ENDORSEMENT ONLY FOR THE SA CARNEIRO LINE OF SUPPORT FOR

STRONG REGIONAL AUTONOMY, BUT NOT FOR THE MAN HIMSELF. MOTA AMARAL ADMITTED THAT AN EVENTUAL PSD-PS PLATFORM UNDERSTANDING COULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE RGA TO PURSUE A FORCEFUL APPROACH TOWARD THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ON THE QUESTION OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY.

6. COMMENT: WHILE MOTA AMARAL INSISTS THAT THE RGA'S NEW APPROACH WAS CONCEIVED SOMEWHAT PRIOR TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN LISBON, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S CURRENT DISTRESS HAS ENCOURAGED THE RGA TO PLAY ITS NEW HAND WITH MORE CONFIDENCE. MOTA AMARAL IS A SENSIBLE MAN, HOWEVER, AND BARRING A SHARP LEFTWARD LURCH ON THE CONTINENT, WILL NOT EMBARK ON AN ANTI-LISBON CRUSADE TO MAKE POINTS WITH THE LOCAL POPULACE AND QUIET THE SEPARATISTS. BUT HE IS DETERMINED TO PRESS AHEAD NOW WITH HIS PLANS TO DEVELOP THE WIDEST POSSIBLE REGIONAL AUTONOMY. WHATEVER THE REACTION FROM LISBON, THIS  
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ATTITUDE CANNOT HELP BUT BOOST HIS LOCAL POPULARITY.  
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## Message Attributes

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